



**U.S. Department of Justice
U.S. Attorney's Office
Western District of Texas**

Johnny Sutton, U.S. Attorney

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**BERNARDO LUCERO, JR. PLEADS GUILTY IN
CONSPIRACY TO DEFRAUD EL PASO INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT**

United States Attorney Johnny Sutton announced that this morning architect and interior designer Bernardo Lucero, Jr., pleaded guilty to charges associated with fraudulent contract activities which deprived citizens of El Paso of the right to honest services. Appearing before United States District Judge Frank Montalvo in El Paso, Lucero pleaded guilty to conspiracy to commit mail fraud and conspiracy to make false statements to obtain credit. As a result, Lucero faces up to 20 years in federal prison on the mail fraud conspiracy; up to five years in federal prison on the false statements conspiracy; and, a maximum \$250,000 fine for each count. No sentencing date has been scheduled.

By pleading guilty, Lucero admitted that from January 2002 to July 24, 2007, he agreed to assist an elected official secure a \$25,000 home improvement loan from United Bank of El Paso Del Norte by providing false and fraudulent information. In addition, Lucero admitted to conspiring to provide and help others provide money to an elected trustee of the EPISD in exchange for acts on the part of the official in his or her official capacity, thus depriving the constituents of that school district the right to the honest services of the elected Trustee.

This investigation—conducted by the Federal Bureau of Investigation—continues. Assistant United States Attorney Debra Kanof is prosecuting this case on behalf of the government.

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